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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to: (a) identify those attitudes which best serve to explain the concept of teacher militancy, and (b) provide a basis for development of concise instruments for the assessment of such attitudes. A survey instrument, entitled "Classroom Teacher Point of View," was constructed to assess attitudes of teachers regarding their work environments and regarding issues commonly associated with teacher militancy, union organization, and professionalization. The self-administering survey instruments were returned by 2,178 classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools in the 1,389 California unified school districts which had an average daily attendance greater than 4,000. Results of the survey provided a basis for defining teacher militancy as a complex of attitudes characteristically including (a) pronounced lack of confidence in school district administration, (b) general lack of support for the school principal, (c) cynical disbelief in the integrity of those in authority, (d) dissatisfaction with existing conditions of education, (e) strong predisposition toward educational change in general, (f) marked tendency to accept the processes of union organization, and (g) inclination to seek increased professional authority and responsibility. (Author/MJM)

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DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER MILITANCY:

A FACTOR ANALYSIS OF TEACHER ATTITUDES

Richard D. Porter

The objectives of this study were (1) to identify those attitudes which best serve to explain the concept of teacher militancy, and (2) to provide a basis for development of concise instruments for the assessment of such attitudes.

The term, "teacher militancy," was used here to refer to a complex of attitudes relating to the teacher's working environment. That term has been used somewhat ambiguously in current literature, referring on one hand to teacher characteristics and on the other hand to characteristics of teacher organizations. Another term, "teacher organization militancy," would seem more appropriate as a descriptor for organization characteristics. Teacher organization militancy was essentially beyond the scope of this study. Teacher attitudes regarding teacher organizations, however, were most importantly within its scope.

A survey instrument, entitled "Classroom Teacher Point of View," was constructed to assess attitudes of teachers regarding their working environments and regarding issues commonly associated with teacher militancy, union organization, and professionalization. One hundred twenty-nine attitudinal items were selected from an inventory of statements which had been prepared for possible use in the instrument. Each statement was designed to elicit responses on an agree-disagree scale. Twenty-one demographic items were also included in the instrument. While all attitudinal items were generally keyed to the teacher's working environment, 42 of the 129 selected had been designed to reflect personality

characteristics which might influence the teacher's relationship to that environment.

A seven-point Likert-type scale was provided for each of the attitudinal items (1 = strong disagreement, 2 = moderate disagreement, 3 = slight disagreement, 4 = uncertain [or partly agree and partly disagree], 5 = slight agreement, 6 = moderate agreement, 7 = strong agreement). Appropriate scales were provided for each of the demographic items, such that 14 of these could be treated as continuous or quasi-continuous variables. Zero was reserved in all cases as a missing value indicator.

The self-administering survey instruments were sent to a sample of 5067 classroom teachers in 735 elementary and secondary schools in the 139 California unified school districts which had an average daily attendance greater than 4000. Completed returns were received from 2178 respondents. These respondents included approximately 36.9 percent men and 63.1 percent women, 53.4 percent elementary level (grades K - 6) and 46.6 percent secondary level (grades 7 - 12), 55.5 percent from large school districts (over 25,000 ADA) and 44.5 percent from smaller school districts (from 4000 to 25,000 ADA).

Factor analysis of the resulting data set was carried out in three stages. First, the entire data set, including 14 of the demographic variables, was analyzed. Second, a factor analysis was performed on a subset of these variables which had been selected on the basis of the first-stage results. Third, a second-order factor solution was obtained from an analysis of the factor correlation matrix resulting from the oblique second-stage solution.

One hundred forty-three variables were incorporated in the original factor analysis. Several principal-factor analyses were performed

on this first-stage correlation matrix. A twenty-factor solution which accounted for 33 percent of the variance was the most satisfactory one which could be drawn from that matrix. Although the proportion of variance accounted for was relatively small, it was not unexpected. With a very large number of variables covering a broad range of respondent characteristics and attitudes, much of the variance would necessarily be specifically associated with individual variables. Simple structure (oblique) rotation of this factor matrix provided a substantially better explanation of these attitudinal data than did the comparable varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Although most simple structure variables could be identified and interpreted with reasonable confidence, it was clear that the demographic variables had produced certain dominant factors which had no important loadings (over 0.35) on attitudinal variables, and moreover, many variables with low communalities (less than 0.20) represented little more than excess baggage in the factor matrix. The smaller set of variables to be incorporated in subsequent analyses was selected by deleting all demographic variables and those attitudinal variables with low communalities which were not loaded significantly by any of the original factors.

Seventy-five attitudinal variables were selected for the second-stage factor analysis. Several principal-factor analyses were also performed on the second-stage correlation matrix. An eighteen-factor solution which accounted for 51.8 percent of the total variance was found to be most satisfactory. The resulting factor matrix was then rotated for simple structure. Although three of the factors in this solution were relatively weak, all could be identified and interpreted with reasonable confidence. Twelve of the 18 factors were reflected as a convenience in

interpretation. These oblique factor dimensions were identified as follows (shown here with representative item variables and factor loadings):

Factor 1. Cynicism-Hostility
115. If school administrators could get away with it, they would probably try to double the work load of teachers. (0.49)
88. There are many school administrators who ought to be put down for all the miserable things they've done to teachers. (0.45)
9. School administrators have all too often tried to exploit the teachers who work under them. (0.38)

Factor 2. Introversion-Extroversion
77. I find it difficult to say or do anything in front of a large adult audience, even though I have no problem with groups of students. (0.64)
58. At a meeting or in a group of people I prefer to keep quiet. (0.60)

Factor 3. Compulsiveness
51. Whenever I start a job, I finish it. (0.65)
107. I usually keep everything in its proper place so that I know just where to find it. (0.60)

Factor 4. Support for Student-centered Decision-making
70. What is taught in a school should be determined primarily by student indications of their needs and interests. (0.49)
89. The best kind of teacher evaluation comes from student support and enthusiasm for their teachers. (0.45)
44. Students should set their own standards of conduct without pressure from teachers or other adult authorities. (0.26)

Factor 5. Lack of Confidence in Colleagues
28. Too many incompetent teachers reach permanent status. (0.63)
25. Teachers can be trusted to provide sound instructional programs without administrative direction or supervision. (-0.29)
85. The leadership of a skilled principal is important in the development of a high quality instructional program in a school. (0.26)

Factor 6. Need for Peer Acceptance
75. It is important for me as a teacher to be accepted and respected by the rest of my faculty. (0.70)
105. What other teachers think of my teaching is important to me. (0.69)

Factor 7. Neuroticism
39. The day-to-day problems of teaching often seem more than I can handle. (0.70)
56. At the end of most school days my nerves seem on edge. (0.65)

Factor 8. Support for Peer Evaluation
30. Probationary teachers should be granted tenure only upon recommendation of the permanent teachers in their school. (0.54)

119. An experienced teacher could generally do a better job than a principal in evaluating probationary teachers. (0.50)
83. Teachers in a school unit should assume responsibility for seeing that a high level of instructional quality is maintained among their teaching colleagues. (0.28)

Factor 9. Support for Unionization
60. Obtaining a beneficial collective bargaining contract is worthwhile even if teachers have to go on strike to get it. (0.91)
26. The only way teachers will ever become respectable professionals is by using the collective bargaining process to secure this recognition. (0.69)
62. When a majority of teachers votes to strike against a school district, no responsible classroom teacher should cross picket lines to report for work, even if he disapproves of the strike. (0.60)

Factor 10. Confidence in District Administration
61. The present school board in my district is doing the best job possible under existing circumstances. (0.80)
59. Generally in this school district the superintendent and his staff seem to make the right decisions. (0.70)
5. A school board can usually be trusted to follow its adopted rules without making arbitrary changes in matters of teacher concern. (0.51)

Factor 11. Conservative-Liberal Viewpoint
22. With regard to social issues (social change, compensatory education, integration, etc.), I consider myself . . . very conservative. (0.64)
20. Our present society ought to stay pretty much as it is now in spite of all the agitation from pressure groups. (0.44)
12. The best school population is one where there is a reasonably representative mixture of racial and ethnic groups. (-0.41)

Factor 12. Change Orientation
55. Most educational programs in my district are woefully out of date. (0.73)
63. This district simply tries to maintain the status quo and resists educational innovations. (0.50)
72. Many drastic changes need to be made in education in the immediate future. (0.32)

Factor 13. Individualism
121. I would prefer to work on a task with a group of teachers rather than on one where I alone am responsible for the final product. (-0.58)
16. I can usually get a job done better by working alone rather than with a group. (0.55)

Factor 14. Deference
90. If the principal suggested that I handle a teaching procedure differently I would probably go along with his idea even though I thought my way was better. (0.43)
94. If someone really puts pressure on me, I would probably give in rather than fight it. (0.42)

Factor 15. Need for Achievement

67. I would like to be given responsibility for an experimental program where the starting odds are about 60-40 against succeeding. (0.59)

103. I would prefer to teach in a situation which is challenging and difficult, rather than in one where I can always be sure of my ability. (0.57)

33. I prefer to work on tasks that I'm sure I can handle rather than attempt more difficult tasks where I might not be successful. (-0.34)

Factor 16. Confidence in School Principal

50. My present school principal is doing the best job possible under existing circumstances. (0.57)

48. A teacher should always seek the support of his principal before bringing a school problem to the attention of higher level administrators or the school board. (0.32)

Factor 17. Support for Teacher Decision-making

25. Teachers can be trusted to provide sound instructional programs without administrative direction or supervision. (0.35)

1. Selection of textbooks should primarily be the responsibility of teachers. (0.33)

46. The teacher should make all important decisions regarding how a given curriculum is to be taught to his students. (0.33)

Factor 18. Acquiescence-Assertiveness

8. I usually try to avoid influencing other people with my personal viewpoint. (0.38)

7. Teachers should always remain well dressed and groomed during the school day. (0.28)

109. Teachers who can't adapt to accepted procedures in the school to which they're assigned should look for another job. (0.27)

Although no single factor could be identified as "teacher militancy," several of them seemed somewhat closely related to this concept. Moreover, the oblique solution was characterized by substantial correlations among the resulting factors. Given these considerations, a second-order factor analysis, that is, a factor analysis of the factor correlation matrix from the simple structure solution, seemed appropriate. (The objective of such a higher-order factor analysis is to reduce a natural oblique solution to its orthogonal components.)

Six second-order factors were extracted in a principal-factor solution of the eighteen-factor correlation matrix. The resulting factor

matrix was rotated orthogonally using the varimax criterion. The first and strongest of the resulting second-order factors was readily identified as a "teacher militancy" factor complex. It had significant loadings on seven of the 18 first-order factors:

1. Cynicism-Hostility (0.54)
7. Neuroticism (0.46)
8. Support for Peer Evaluation (0.24)
9. Support for Unionization (0.54)
10. Confidence in District Administration (-0.62)
12. Change Orientation (0.49)
16. Confidence in School Principal (-0.52).

Second-order factor complex II (identified as "self-concept") had loadings on Factors 2 (0.70), 5 (-0.22), 7 (0.24), 11 (0.22), 14 (0.29), and 15 (-0.60). Factor complex III (identified as "need for order") had loadings on Factors 3 (0.56), 6 (0.35), 11 (0.49), and 18 (0.53). Factor complex IV (identified as "concept of change") had loadings on Factors 4 (0.67), 8 (0.25), 11 (-0.34), 12 (0.37), and 15 (0.25). Factor complex V (identified as "need for group support") had loadings on Factors 6 (0.47), 13 (-0.52), and 14 (0.30). Factor complex VI (identified as "teacher role concept") had loadings on Factors 5 (-0.34), 9 (0.26), and 17 (0.55).

The first of the factor complexes resulting from the second-order analysis provided a basis for defining teacher militancy as a complex of attitudes characteristically including (a) a pronounced lack of confidence in school district administration, (b) a general lack of support for the school principal, (c) a cynical disbelief in the integrity of those in authority, (d) dissatisfaction with existing conditions of education, (e) a strong predisposition toward educational change in general, (f) a marked tendency to accept the processes of union organization, and (g) an inclination to seek increased professional authority and responsibility.

While there is no basis for considering any single part of this

definition a necessary condition for teacher militancy, these components, together with the data from which they were drawn, describe an attitudinal framework which may provide a rational foundation for further study of personnel relations in education.

If the results of this study are sustained in subsequent research, the development of instruments for assessment of teacher militancy would certainly be feasible. Such instruments could prove useful and important in the formulation of effective personnel relations programs.

A broad range of policy implications for school management can be drawn from the results of this analysis as they are related back to the basic data from which they were derived. Central to the concept of teacher militancy as it has evolved from this analysis is a strong desire for change in education. School management is perceived as antithetical to this overriding value of change. The association of professionalization objectives with teacher militancy suggests one possible channel for change which could have positive value both for the militant teacher and for school management. School management initiative would be essential in most instances of such educational change. However, in view of the association of cynicism and distrust of school management with teacher militancy, it is reasonable to conclude that management decisions in this regard which are perceived as unilateral by teachers would probably intensify those negative aspects of teacher militancy.

Clearly, school management has certain options available in redirecting teacher militancy into positive channels. However, it is quite evident that, with no management initiative in this regard, the default channel for teacher militancy is in the direction of the adversary processes associated with unionization.